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sonality is the key to the mystery of human existence; it unlocks every ward of immortality.

First know thyself, and all things see,
 God and thy fellow find in thee,
 Around, within; for thee is nought
 Save what thou findest in thy thought.

S P I N O Z A . *

By A. E. KROEGER.

With the exception of Kant, no modern philosopher probably has been the subject of so much criticism and notice as Spinoza. Indeed, there still seems to hang around his writings a curious fascination, not the less remarkable in that he still seems to be more or less of a puzzle to those he fascinates. The cause of this interest is of a twofold character; first, the personal character of the man, which inspired, as it still inspires, a reverence and admiration that extended to his works, and then from these was reflected back to the man with additional lustre. Second, the style, wherein his chief work, the work by which he became known to later ages, the *Ethics*, was composed,—a style, or method, which he, in imitation of Descartes, called the geometrical method—had about it a proud air of evidence, which aroused wonder where it did not excite implicit faith.

That the personal character of Spinoza was that of a sincere and thoroughly earnest searcher after the true in human knowing, there can be no doubt; but neither is it possible, after a perusal of his letters, to deny the fact, that he was not brave enough—had not character enough, as the Germans would say—to state the result of his investigations with a frankness disregarding all earthly consequences. Even in

* I. Benedict de Spinoza; his Life, Correspondence, and Ethics. By R. Willis, M.D. London: Trübner & Co., 1870.

II. Benedicti de Spinozæ Operæ quæ supersunt omnia. Ex editionibus principibus denuo edidit et præatus est Carolus Hermanus Bruder. Lipsiæ: Tauchnitz, 1843.

III. The Science of Knowledge. Translated from the German of J. G. Fichte, by A. E. Kroeger. Published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1868.

his letters to his friend Oldenburg, Spinoza shows himself timid and fearful of unpleasant results should he frankly and fully speak out his inmost mind. Nay, the very work, the *Ethics*, which remained unpublished during his lifetime from that dread, breathes it on every page, to the confusion and misapprehension of the reader; the word "God"—though throughout the work it is used merely as an equivalent for "substance" or "nature"—being retained, together with the words "immortality" and "freedom," whilst the sole object of the book is to root out the three conceptions, signified in language by those words, from the human mind forever.

That Spinoza should have written his work in a style and method borrowed from mathematics, is to be explained partly by the example set by Descartes, and partly by the extraordinary development of the mathematical sciences at that time—although the chief mover in that development, Leibnitz, showed wisdom enough not to use the mathematical method in philosophy—but perhaps also in part by reason of the obscurity that this style promised to throw over subjects which he had no intention of stating in their nakedness and with the air of mathematical certainty—which, nevertheless, seemed to be inseparably linked to it—a certainty, by the bye, which is in general considerably overrated, for in the higher regions of mathematics disputes are as endless, fruitless, vehement, and absurd, because resting upon the same grounds, as in the sciences of metaphysical physics and theology. And yet this air of certainty excited the admiration of Lessing, Jacobi and Goethe, and to them, though perhaps not to Lessing, hid a deficiency of system which led Leibnitz to characterize it as absurd and unintelligible; led Kant, who had thoroughly studied Spinoza, as is evident from the many places where he mentions him, to consider it as one of the many previous one-sided philosophies; and led Fichte to declare, that, seizing Spinoza's system as a whole, it was correct enough so far as it went, but that, in so far as it utterly overlooked the moral phenomenon in human life, it was but one part of a complete system of knowledge, indeed simply the Theoretical Part of the Science of Knowledge.

This latter deficiency, pointed out by Fichte, is in the same

way, as it may here be well enough to remark, a conspicuous feature of those metaphysical disquisitions wherewith the prominent modern works of physical science are surcharged; for whereas in these disquisitions the intellectual (theoretical) faculty of man is quietly, from the mere fact of its being a fact, assumed as such fact, the moral (practical) faculty, which surely manifests and has at all times manifested itself in the same way as a fact, is either merely overlooked, treated as if it did not exist, or, in the manner of Spinoza, treated with most absolute confusion of language as part of the intellectual faculty,—with polemical asides against those who point out the fact. This deficiency of system, when consciously planned, as in the case of Spinoza and the last mentioned class of arguers, has its ground in the opinion, that, by admitting two facts of human knowledge—the one asserting an intelligent *knowing* of things, and the other an absolute, practical, moral *acting* upon things, men can never arrive at a unit system, and that to arrive at such a system is the absolute end, and is moreover the only means to gain a comprehension of the universe. — Now, to this opinion the following suggestion might be made: supposing this were so, supposing you had succeeded in tracing all the phenomena of the universe back in time to a unit—you may call it a unit faculty, power, motion, or simply one, as you like,—would you not, before you could trace back from your present billions of phenomena to this unit phenomenon, have had to pass in a *regressus* from *two* to one? Now, since all the rest of the *regressus* is easy enough and may be at once granted—though, being infinite, it is absurd for you to undertake it—you might as well try and make clear to your mind the problem which will constitute your final difficulty: how to proceed from two to one in such a manner that in that one, or unit, there shall be absolutely nothing else contained than a one. Is it possible, conceivable, thinkable to do so? or must you not think this one, in order to explain the evolution of a two out of it, as something else than one? Must you not, supposing you think it as force, think it as having also *degrees*? if you think it as motion, in Descartes' manner, as having *directions*? if you think it as a faculty, as having *objects*? In

short, must you not always think this one as synthetical?—which means, as constituted so, that you cannot think or conceive it without another conception forcing itself upon your mind along with it. If to this you reply, “Yes”—and it is impossible to see how you can avoid doing so—then you might as well at once give up the thought of reducing all phenomena to a final one as an absurd and contradictory undertaking, and save yourself infinite labor, and the world a mass of useless—nay, obstructive—rubbish.

But if we abandon oneness in system, do we not lapse into that dreadful dualism which has been ever the curse of mankind? First, there is really no reason in the world why a dualistic system should be worse or better than a unit system; but secondly and chiefly, is it not all the same, since it is we who make the system, our intellect which constructs it, and our knowledge which knows it; and that if it were necessary for the ego to have even a triad system, the ego would just the same remain the imperishable one which it is, and the universe retain all its wonderful symmetry and multiplicity?

Moreover, that famous science of mathematics, the certainty whereof is supposed to rest upon that unit principle—which principle was thus taken by Spinoza as necessary also for a science of human knowing—has just now itself appeared as utterly unable to stand upon a unit, and geometry as utterly without a single axiom unless directions in space are presupposed, and hence duplicity, &c. Nay, it was this very defect of mathematics—if defect that can be called without which mathematics would not be—which drove Leibnitz from that science to philosophy, and there, discovering to him the secret of the synthetical character of mathematics, as well as of everything in human knowledge, brought distinctly before his vision the Calculus! For there it became clear to him how knowledge, to be knowledge, cannot think a one, complete, compact and absolute totality in itself without at the same thinking an infinity of directions in it; cannot think a circle without thinking it also as an infinite polygon; not a unit, without thinking it also as an infinity of fractions; and *vice versa* in each case. To be sure, you, who do not comprehend it, can stop me at every additional

fraction as I proceed, adding $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}$, &c., and demonstrate to me clearly that I have not yet my unit—my “actual infinite,” as Leibnitz expresses it—and cannot get it at any stopping-place; but the very stipulation was that I should add *ad infinitum*, and it is this stipulation which increases the fraction to a unit, and makes the infinite actual and calculable. Most emphatically, a curved line is not straight; and a circle, therefore, wherever you interrupt my drawing it, is still a curve and not composed of straight lines;—but our very agreement is that it is an infinity of straight lines, and that hence you must at no point interrupt me. Both statements are equally correct, yours and mine; yours from the standpoint of an infinity of time, which never reaches the first original fundamental difficulty, and in its infinite *regressus* is therefore always perfectly correct; mine, from the standpoint of absolute totality, which looks into and through that difficulty. But do not now bewail on that account the sad, desperate condition of human reason, which has two views of every matter, nor rave about Kantian skepticism, when there never lived one who could lay claim to a more absolute knowledge than Kant; but consider maturely this:—I should be foolish to hold that my statement, as expressed above, were the *true* one, and yours the false; both are absolutely true; but you may hold yours and not comprehend mine, whilst I cannot comprehend mine without comprehending yours. Hence the supreme truth rests not in either view, or indeed in any view, but in this: to be able to see clearly that reason could not be reason unless it regarded the circle and the unit, for instance, in both those ways; and that if this were not so, if this duplicity were not in reason and constituted reason, you would not be able to argue with me, nay, you would not even be able to eat (as Fichte says somewhere) the bread and butter that you carry to your mouth, since neither you nor the bread and butter would exist, and indeed this whole universe would vanish into nothingness.

Certainly, if this clear insight, this surveying at one glance the whole field of knowledge, and thus becoming able to immediately prove every possible instance of a knowledge, and hence all things—since all things exist to rational beings, only

as knowledge—by the only absolutely satisfactory test, that, if this particular instance of a knowledge were not as it is, reason could not be reason, and hence neither a question could be asked concerning it, nor an answer desired; if this absolute certainty in all actual and possible phenomena of life, and the unwavering self-sufficiency and reliance resulting therefrom, can be called skepticism; then Kant was a skeptic. But at this clear insight it was impossible for Spinoza to arrive, from the very fact that he chose the geometrical method for the elaboration of his investigation. For that method necessarily prevented him from going to the ultimate phenomenon before mentioned, the phenomenon of the synthetical character of the ego, and kept him halting in the *regressus* at a point chosen *ad libitum*, which point thus became his fundamental axiom. It will hereafter appear that this arbitrarily chosen fundamental axiom in Spinoza's *regressus* is the conception of Substantiality.

It may seem strange that an earnest and acute investigator of a problem should adopt a method for his investigation, which can be *à priori* shown to cancel the possibility of arriving at a solution of the problem, and be so blind to this its nature; yet the phenomenon is really not strange nor difficult to explain, though this is not the place to explain it; indeed that blindness is so universal, that up to the discovery of Kant *all* men labored under it; and, even since his discovery was made public, only the smallest number of men have worked their way out of it. That Spinoza was fully conscious of the problem—as, indeed, were Descartes, Leibnitz, and most of the great minds of that age—is evident enough from his letters, namely, the problem to discover a Science of all knowing, which should set at rest forever all metaphysical disputes, and furnish an indisputable basis for every other science. In a letter to John Bresser on the best method of arriving at absolute as distinguished from contingent knowledge, Spinoza thus expresses this point: "From what I have now said, it clearly appears what the true method must be and wherein it chiefly consists; namely, in a knowledge of pure intellect alone, its nature and its laws."

But this knowledge could clearly be obtained only from an examination of the "intellect alone," causing it to arise as it

were and construct itself before his own examining intellect, and in this self-constructing revealing necessarily all the conditions of its possibility, that is, "its nature and its laws." In this way Fichte afterwards proceeded in his Science of Knowledge; but Spinoza, utterly regardless of his purpose, and following the mathematical method, took his start from axioms; although these very axioms were, and always had been, the points in dispute among philosophers. Now geometry can very well start from axioms, for geometry does not pretend to deduce its axioms from the ultimate "laws of the intellect"; it takes space, point and line, simply as presuppositions, from philosophy, and leaves it the duty of philosophers to account for them as phenomena of the intellect; in short, geometry has nothing to do with the faculty of thinking, which faculty involves a duplicity, but simply with the faculty of contemplation, by means of which it constructs. But the science of philosophy, in the sense in which Spinoza proposed it to himself, as seen above, has no earthly *raison d'être* if it does not build itself up without any axiom, and from out of itself furnish all the axioms that any other science requires.

In addition to this ruinous defect of starting with the very axioms in dispute, and to the still worse absurdity of producing arbitrarily, at the commencement of each new part of his Ethics, new axioms, to any extent it may suit his purpose—a mode of proceeding by which anyone could easily build up any imaginary science—there occurs at the very beginning of the Ethics one of those word-subterfuges which run through the whole book, and which are contemptible when he uses them in such instances as "God," "freedom," and "immortality"; and this use he indulges in continually, although he himself warns against this abuse of words in the Second Part of the Ethics, p. 47.

Take as an instance that very famous opening definition of the Ethics wherein *causa sui* is defined as that the essence or nature whereof includes existence. Now, here the word *causa* is either utterly meaningless, or else surreptitiously carries along the conception of cause, which, in the case applied to "God" or "substance," would be the very point in dispute; so also the word "existence" has here either the surrepti-

tiously appended meaning of "existence in time," or else none at all. Now, a thing, call it "A" if you please, existing in time, can, in no meaning of the word, be called its own cause, since it would then have to be thought existing previous to its existence in order to become thinkable as its own effect. The phrase "self-cause," or "cause of itself," is, therefore, utterly meaningless and absurd. The word "cause" is simply inapplicable in the case. If existence does not include time, however, and be here merely a—very awkward, to be sure—metaphor for "being represented in mind," there would again be no cause, in any sense of the word "cause"—unless, as indeed is the case, the mind be taken as such cause; but, as this view is the only one dogmatists of every description are incapable of entertaining, the definition would have to be expressed thus: "To that which I cannot conceive except as being represented in my mind, I cannot assign another cause; hence I can assign no cause for it: hence I call it *causa sui*." But I might just as well, to all intents and purposes, call it X, or Y, or Z, or Nothing. Why not at once say boldly, that it is absurd to apply any category of Being at all to the conception of that totality of all the universe which men call God, and which Spinoza calls alternately God, Nature, or Substance; and that, just as well as call it God, we might call it X, and confess that we could say no more about it, since "every determination would be a negation," and an infinity of determinations would only be increasing the number of determinations and hence of negations. To this argument Leibnitz, indeed, had ready to oppose the great discovery of his Calculus, that the infinity of fractions do not merely increase their number but involve the conception of an "actual" unit, as the infinite straight lines of a curve involve the circle, and that this totality remains complete and determined in itself in spite of—nay, by virtue of—the infinity of the determinations.

Having here touched the fundamental basis and error of Spinoza's system—for the Ethics is a system, however unartistically built up on a wrong method and upon arbitrarily chosen axioms—let us improve the opportunity to enter upon its thorough examination. It is even the paramount problem, or subject of thought, of every self-conscious intelligence, no

matter how low in grade, that ever looked upon itself and the universe. It is, therefore, almost unnecessary to premise that we enter upon it in a spirit of utmost reverence; but having thus drawn off our shoes to tread the consecrated ground, it is of equal importance to roll up our sleeves, so to speak, and go to work in dead earnest, caring for no previous spoken or written word, but looking the thing calmly in the face. Nor let any one be afraid that we shall thereby lose sight of Spinoza; on the contrary, it is he, though his name be not mentioned always, who shall be continually kept in view; and let it be remembered, that with him falls the whole present school of popular writers on the metaphysics of physical science.

Let us, therefore, construct problematically the conception of an infinite series of fractions, $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}$, &c. &c. Now let us attribute to one of these fractions a power to become conscious of itself. To become conscious of itself, its power so to become conscious must evidently be somewhere checked, thrown back upon itself; for only thus can it become conscious that it has a power to become conscious, and hence only thus can it become conscious. Thus checked, the fraction becomes conscious of itself and of a check; and doing so must both relate and oppose the check to itself. Clearly, the check cannot be itself, for the fraction is assumed as a power to act and not to check itself; in so far the check is, therefore, opposed to it; at the same time the check could not check it, could have no influence upon it at all, were it not related to it in some way. Now in so far as the fraction should view that check as its opposite simply, it would regard that check as the *cause* of its being checked, hence under the conception of causality; but in so far as it should view that check as related to it, it would regard that check as a self-imposed limitation, or as one of its *attributes*; and would thus regard the checkedness under the conception of substantiality. In the first case it would establish a distinction of *kind*, as the common saying is, or a *qualitative* distinction between itself and the check; in the second, a distinction of *degree*, or a *quantitative* distinction. It might still further combine the two views together in a twofold manner, and thus arrive at four different views of the relation

between itself and the check; but these four different views of regarding the relation of the mind to the universe we must leave each one to trace out by his own industry, or by referring to Fichte's Science of Knowledge. But furthermore: to become conscious of the check it would have to ascribe to itself such a power of becoming conscious of a check, a power which we call sensation; and again, to become conscious of *itself* as that which were being checked, it would have to ascribe to itself a power to cast this sensation from out of itself and behold it outside of itself, as it were,—a power which is called contemplation. But still further, it could not ascribe to itself a sensation generally, unless it ascribed to itself a power to experience a series of sensations in *succession*, and thus a power to become conscious of a series of *time-moments*; nor a power of contemplation generally, unless it ascribed to itself a power to become conscious of a series of directions in it, and thus a power to contemplate *Space*; and as these two powers must both enter consciousness, the Time-moments and Space-directions would have to be related together; and thus together with the first consciousness of the imagined fraction there would be for it a time and space universe filled up with directions moving in succession—in other words, with matter.

Now, becoming conscious of itself as a fraction in such a time and space universe, which universe it would necessarily have to view as infinite in all directions—infinite in extent, or size, because as a power to act it could never conceive or think a finite check, beyond which it would not again have the power to extend its activity; infinite in smallness, or divisibility, for the same reason; and infinite at both ends of time, beginning and end of time, again for the same reason,—let us ask: How would it regard its relation to this infinity of fractions which it encountered in all directions? Clearly, in the same way as it would become conscious of any single fraction, namely, by disregarding or skipping over the infinity of fractions into which it could re-divide every smallest fraction, the very minutest grain of sand, and seizing that infinity as a whole fraction, as a unit. Thus it would seize the infinity of fractions in time and space of the universe as one whole, as a unity and totality, and give it a new name—

calling it, say, Universe, Nature, Substance, or God. To this new conception of a totality it might now relate itself under either of the two fundamental forms of relation already mentioned, substantiality and causality. If it viewed the totality under the conception of causality, it would arrive at the conception of a Cause of the world, or of its infinity of fractions, and would view that world and itself as effects of that cause. By doing so it would utterly overlook the peculiar qualitative distinction between each of the infinite series of fractions as also a unit, and this new unit of the whole series as simply a unit having no fractional element in it whatsoever, and thus its causality conception of the new unit would also have that character of time and sequence, which it gave to the fractions. In short, the new conception would be characterized as a creator of the world, preceding it in time and calling it into existence, regulating each of its actions, and holding it by its power: in fine, the usual conception of God. The absurdity of applying to this conception of the whole series of fractions what was applicable to the fractions only *as* fractions, and what only their fractional nature involved, would either be utterly disregarded, or defiantly proclaimed as necessary and right, and thus the conception of God would be in all modes and manners anthropomorphized as Cause, Creator, Artist, Person, Self-conscious, Intelligence, Wrath, Love, Justice—and why not add Red, Yellow, Hot, Cold, &c., *ad infinitum*?

Or, secondly—and there can be only two fundamental ways of relating two together, the fraction and the unit—the fraction would regard that relation under the conception of Substantiality; that is, as simply the conceived (thought or represented) unity of the infinite series of fractions, which fractions would thus be properly enough called its attributes. (See Spinoza's Ethics, Part I., D, 3-6.)

For instance: you perceive, say a piece of gold. Through your eye you get the sensation of yellow color, which sensation within you you cast out of yourself, and put in space as a yellow body or substance; through your touch you get the sensation of hardness, which you also thus objectivate and connect with the yellow body, &c. &c.; in short, the infinite attributes, which “your understanding seizes” thus in pro-

cess of time, you, at every moment that you endeavor to think them, gather and shape into a unity, a substance, and thereupon think them as "constituting the essence of that substance." What, then, is the substance—this gold, for instance? You cannot characterize or describe it in any other way than by the different attributes you have experienced: yellowish, hard, malleable, &c. In short, the substance is nothing except the conceived unity of those attributes; is nothing at all in itself; but at the same time it accompanies every conscious perception of attributes.

Now, in this manner the fraction—when thinking under the category of substantiality—thinks the conception of the totality of *all* objects or fractions. It is clear, therefore, that whereas, if it thinks a fractional substance, it thinks it as infinite only in its determinedness, it must think the substance of the totality or "God" as "unconditionedly infinite" (*Ethics*, Pt. I., D, C & E); since whereas of the fractional substance you can "negate infinite attributes," as in the instance of gold you can negate blueness, fluidity, &c., the conception of the substance of the totality is the conception of all the infinite attributes of all the infinite fractions.

Spinoza develops this view of "God" quite at length in the first two parts of his *Ethics*, although the development is accomplished in an altogether arbitrary, empirical, and unscientific way; that is, none of the various propositions that are made to follow the preliminary definitions, axioms, &c., are logically derived from those preliminaries, nor are they even arranged in an artistic or scientific consecutive-ness, but they seem to be picked at random from the various notions that chanced to flow through Spinoza's head, with no other view than to illustrate the dogmatic axioms of those preliminaries. That they do not lack connection with them, and give to the whole work an air of unwavering unity, is not therefore to be wondered at, since it could not possibly happen otherwise.

It has already been seen that the conception of the Substance of any multiplicity is simply the represented unity of that multiplicity; hence under this conception the Substance cannot be asserted to have existed previous to its attributes. Hence the question of time does not enter their relation to the

substance at all; it is, under the category of substantiality, altogether lost sight of; the view is, as Spinoza expresses it, altogether *sub specie æternitatis*. He to whom this view appears, on that account, as more profound than the view *sub specie temporis* of the causality relation, thereby only shows his blindness to the one-sidedness of stand-point he occupies. Yet almost all the students of Spinoza have conceived it, on this account only, as preëminently dignified and sublime.

The substance of the whole series of fractions being conceived thus, that is, as not preceding that series, all that occurs in the series can of course, when referred to the substance, be ascribed neither to any freedom nor to any necessity in that substance. In a letter to Oldenburg, Spinoza puts this as follows:—"I do by no means think that God is subject to fate, destiny, or necessity; but hold that all which happens comes to pass by inevitable necessity from the nature of God; even as it is generally admitted that from the nature of God it follows that God knows Himself. No one, I imagine, will deny that such knowledge follows of necessity from the divine nature; yet no one can so understand the proposition as to assume that God is subjected to fate or necessity, but, on the contrary, that God freely, though at the same time necessarily, knows Himself."

"Freely, though at the same time necessarily," is one of those verbal mistakes, or subterfuges, which disfigure all Spinoza's writings, and which, indeed, can scarcely be avoided by men who hold one-sided views and attempt to express them in language. The word "freely," in language, means either nothing at all, or it means with preceding deliberation, with consciousness of the freedom in the act, with obstacles to oppose the act; the overcoming of which obstacles that word "freely" has precisely been invented to characterize. Hence it cannot be used conjointly with "necessarily." When Spinoza says that "all which happens comes to pass by inevitable necessity from the nature of God," he means that the infinite series of fractional attributes and conditions cannot be thought separate from the thought of their common substance, God; hence cannot be thought as being entered by any freedom of their

own, or interfered with by any chance. Under the "view of eternity," all the changes in and of those fractions must be thought as attributes of that substance, but to the substance itself neither the words "necessity" nor "freedom" can be applied; and beyond this accepting of the changes as a fact, which is unalterable and unchangeable, and which it is the highest wisdom to accept as so fixed and unalterable, the view of substantiality cannot and does not go. Here you rest in the safe beatitude of—"it is so." This is the goal of its philosophy, the goal of human and all possible rational happiness. No more asking absurdly for a cause, no more inquiring for a possible end. The end is itself: it is so; there is the end.

In the same manner, the other expression, "God knows Himself," which occurs in the above letter, misleads, and seems but the compromise of timidity with orthodoxy. What does language mean when it says of a power that it "knows itself"? Either nothing at all, or that that power passes through a series of successive conscious moments, in which series and by which series it becomes aware of and knows itself as that which is conscious in those moments. Now, does Spinoza intend to characterize his substance by any such description? In no manner! How could he? His God, or substance, or nature, as the mere equivalent expressions for "all the attributes of God" (Prop. 19, Part I.), is the thought of all those attributes without any reference to their time-succession; understanding and will, the elements of consciousness, are therefore expressly exempted from that thought of God (Part I., Prop. 17). There is no possibility of any change in your conception of that totality, "God" (Part I., Prop. 19, 20, 21, &c.); and, with this negation of any changeability, it cannot possibly arrive at such a self-knowing. If some one should hold, that a conception of self-knowing as an activity without a successive series of moments is possible, and that Spinoza used the expression "self-knowing" to describe such a conception, the answer is, first, that if Spinoza did so, he used language improperly; and, secondly, a request to describe in language such a peculiar self-knowing. The description will be found impossible.

For these same reasons the predicate "existence," which Spinoza attributes to his conception of a Substance (Part I., Prop. 7 & 11), either means nothing at all, or is a mere subterfuge, such as Kant already clearly pointed out in Descartes' attempted proof of the existence of a God. That celebrated proof had argued thus: the very thought of God—i.e. as the totality of the realities—involves that of His existence; for if it did not, all the realities would not be included in that thought. Kant annihilated this proof at one blow, as follows: either your conception of existence is already involved in that of God, is merely an *analyzed* part of it, and if so your proof is superfluous tautology; or it is not involved in it, and you now add it *synthetically*; but if you do this, you do the very thing the right to do which is denied to you, and hence you have to prove your right, or your assertion must be considered a begging of the question. Spinoza, in this much worse than Descartes, commits the same error in two ways (Part I., Proposition 7, B), as follows: "the substance cannot be produced by something else"; of course not, when once postulated as the conception of all; "hence it must be its own cause," which we have already shown to be either a wrong application of the word "cause"—which word and the whole causal relation Spinoza himself, in his first three axioms, defines as applicable only to the series of fractions—and a mere tautology, or a begging of the question; "hence its essence necessarily involves its existence": and here the word "existence" has either precisely the same meaning as "essence," and thus adds nothing to it and is also a mere tautology—and, in Definition 8, Spinoza really thus explains it, though he calls it there "eternity"—or it surreptitiously brings in from the life of the series of fractions the new empirical conception of their existence. This existence they have, however, only as fractions, and it has no element of that "eternity" or "essence" which the analysis of the word "substance" furnished Spinoza in Definition 8, and cannot therefore be possibly applied to this substance, since it contains no fractional element whatever; but is, on the contrary, simply the negation of everything fractional. The re-occurrence of these same subterfuges—as when he speaks in Part I., Prop. 16 & 17, of God as "acting" and

as "free cause," and, in a still worse way, Prop. 24, mark where he speaks of God as the *Cause* of the *beginning* of the *existence* of things (three misnomers, or subterfuges, in a breath)—it were too tedious and too unprofitable to follow here. Wherever they occur in the *Ethics*, they perplex the unbiased student, whilst from their surroundings they lose their weight with the believers in a God.

The whole First Part of the *Ethics* is, if you clear off this rubbish, nothing but a consistent enough illustration of the manner in which one of the supposed fractions of an infinite series must relate itself to the conception of the totality of the series, if it thinks that totality under the category of substantiality. This totality is, then, an empty thought, neither free nor necessitated; it is as it is: and the infinite attributes of the totality, though related to each other under the form of cause and effect, are in relation to the totality even what they are. They cannot be thought better or worse; they cannot be thought free; though neither can they be thought subject to a capricious change; they rest in eternity, and begin and finish in time. The substantiality-philosopher offers no explanation—nay, scouts it; justly laughs at the causality-philosopher, who imagines he has "explained" matters by equally scouting the "it is as it is" principle of the substantiality-philosopher, and who vociferates: We must have a cause; therefore let us have a cause; and since every cause precedes its effect in time, our cause must have preceded in time, &c. &c.

That no injustice has been done to Spinoza by this characterization of the First Part of his *Ethics* appears conclusively at the beginning of the Second Part, where he assigns to the substance, God, two chief attributes: thinking and extension. Aristotle appears to have been the first who made public, and probably discovered, the separation and classification of all phenomena of the fractional series under these two headings; but the discovery that this separation included all phenomena only in so far as they were conceived by the intellect, or the theoretical faculty, and that in another faculty of reason there was hidden an entirely independent series of phenomena which could not be classified under either of those headings, phenomena that had no extension—for goodness is neither straight nor curved, nor a thinking—in their com-

position;—this ultimate discovery, which clears up the whole region of reason for now and ever, although brought into the world by Jesus Christ, was not scientifically expounded till Kant and Fichte demonstrated it.

Now, supposing we were to stop Spinoza at this opening of his Second Part, and ask him why he ascribes to his “God,” as supreme attributes, these two, “Thinking and Extension,” what could he answer? Clearly only that he had found none other in his consciousness; that all phenomena known to him were either of the one or the other kind. Could any empiricism be more shallow? Why these two, and not rather one—say, Motion?—as Descartes and Swedenborg attempted, more or less successfully, to show in their respective *Principia*, and as our modern physicists of metaphysical tendency love to proclaim; though, for that matter, they might all take lessons in their favorite sciences, of whose advances they so loudly boast, from Descartes and from Swedenborg. The endeavor to trace out the correlation of forces, so called, as being all merely so many variations in the quantities and directions of motion, has by no Darwin or Spencer of these days been so successfully attempted as by Descartes two centuries ago; so that in his now almost forgotten *Principia* the scholar finds general doctrines and even special discoveries of physical science which come now-a-days over to us from Europe, heralded as the great discoveries of the new millennium of science.

But that which is of importance to us here is *the manner* in which Spinoza proves these two attributes to belong to God. The proof runs thus:

1. The infinite series of fractions exhibits to every thinking fraction, amongst other phenomena, the phenomenon of thinking.

2. All these phenomena of the fractions express the essence of “God” in a certain way.

3. Hence the phenomenon of thinking is an attribute of “God,” or “God” is a thinking being.

See the 1st Prop. of the Second Part of the Ethics, and remember that all through the First Part Spinoza expressly excluded these properties from “God” *because* they belonged to the fractions as fractions.

The proof, that "God" is an extended being, takes, of course, precisely the same syllogistical pathway in the 2d Prop. of the Second Part, and its refutation is likewise to be found in the First Part—that is, if the words "extension" and "thinking" are to retain the same meaning when applied to the totality which they had when applied to its fractions. If they are not to be applied in that sense, the whole thing is a subterfuge and juggler's trick: and Spinoza says that they are not to be so applied; that thinking is not to mean understanding, will, &c., nor extension (see Prop. 12) divisibility, &c.

And now, having exhausted the conception of "God" in its two views, briefly from the stand-point of causality, and more at length from the conception of substantiality, let us review the result. From the stand-point of causality, I regard the conception of the unit, which always accompanies that of the infinite series of fractions, as the cause of that series, and overlook the fact that it is altogether an arbitrary act of my own, wheréby I regard it as such cause. This overlooking leads me to change the statement which alone would express the truth, "*I may regard the unit as the cause of the series,*" into the dogmatic "*the unit is the cause,*" &c. In all my statements this oversight follows me and colors them with the same dogmatic absurdity, which however, from the very fact of misemploying the word "is," is considered plausible and reasonable by the multitude. The causality reasoner is a dogmatic realist.

Reasoning, however, from the stand-point of substantiality, I clearly perceive the error of the causality view with its doctrines of a first cause, design, final end, &c., and remove all these false notions by describing that unit as merely the represented or thought unity of the fractions, as the conception of their common substance, of which they are merely attributes, and of which, in itself, nothing can be predicated. From the view of a considerate first cause, or creating God, I am thus driven to a fatalistic acceptance of the nature of the attributes, and their succession as such, simply because they are so, and as, for that reason, the very best and wisest. Spinoza dwells eloquently on the grand calm which this view gives to the soul, and others have repeated it after him; but

this calmness and this sublimity are of a very problematic character. The view is dogmatically idealistic, as opposed to the realistic view of the causality stand-point, but its repose in a fatalistic "it is so" has certainly no higher claim to grandeur than the repose in a Final First Cause of the opposite view. The causalist is in the sad predicament of being unable to explain how he comes to attribute the predicate cause, which he has taken from the finite world, to the conception of the whole infinite totality; but neither can the substantialist explain how he can apply the conception of substance, which he has also taken from the finite world, to the totality of an infinity of attributes, and how the one substance ever changed or could change into an infinity of attributes. The defender of each category can overthrow his opponent; neither can maintain his own proposition. Nor are the views that result from the reciprocal relation of both conceptions, to-wit,

- (1) Quantitative Substantialism,
- (2) Qualitative Substantialism,
- (3) Quantitative Causalism,
- (4) Qualitative Causalism,

any more calculated to give real calm, quiet, and light. Where, then, does the light dwell? As before said, not in any particular *view*, this or that view, but in a complete surveying of the whole region of knowing as having these views and having them necessarily, since otherwise it would not be knowing at all. The true light is not, therefore, to be found in a system, to speak accurately; not to be objectivated into a dead conception; it can only be lived, experienced, applied. He who has made this survey carries this everlasting light always within him, and through it beholds all phenomena and all systems of phenomena. To him no corner of the universe is hidden in darkness; all the possible views of it he, from his survey, knows beforehand, and can at all times apply. He knows that he can and must view the totality of the infinite series as a substance, by relating himself to it; he knows also that he can and must view it, if he wants so to relate himself to it, as the cause of the series: but he knows moreover, and supremely, that these views, and their subordinate views, are views of his know-

ing; that it is his knowing which puts forth both the views and their relating links.

Now, if the ego were merely a faculty of becoming self-conscious, merely a theoretical faculty, or pure intellect, as we have hitherto supposed the fraction to be, we should have to stop here at this ultimate and absolute development of the intellectual faculty into supreme, everlasting clearness. But now let us further suppose that the fraction is to become conscious of itself as an absolute original activity; is to be not only a knowing intellect, but also and preëminently a practical activity in that world which we have seen to arise through the mere assumption of its theoretical faculty; and let us watch the result. The points to be kept in mind are these:

That the fraction, or monad, or ego, is such an active power, is simply asserted as a fact, just as its being an intellectual power is known to us simply as a fact.

That although both powers are necessarily related to each other—namely, in this, that they are both activities—they are also absolutely, qualitatively, opposed to each other in this, that the so-called active or practical power has *direct* causality upon the universe of space and matter, whereas the so-called intellectual or theoretical power has no such direct causality at all, but merely an indirect causality by means of the practical causality, and has direct causality only *upon itself*.

That neither power can be derived—deduced—from the other, though at the same time neither can by itself be comprehended without the other; but that both are the original, absolute constituents of the ego, monad, or fraction, which is their synthesis and nothing else whatever.

The absolute qualitative distinction between thinking and extension Spinoza reluctantly enough admits, as we have seen, though he does not and cannot explain it; but an absolute distinction between the thinking faculty of the ego and its practical or moral faculty he is so utterly opposed to, that the *Ethics* may be said to have been written for no other purpose than to disprove it. In his letters, where he treats the matter at issue, namely, the freedom of the active power, with more than usual candor, he expresses himself thus:

"When I said in my last letter that we are inexcusable, because we are in the hands of God like clay in the hands of the potter, I wished this to be taken in the sense that no one has a title to reproach God with having given him a weak body or an impotent mind. For as it would be absurd if the circle complained that God had not given it the properties of the sphere . . . even so would it be absurd did a man of feeble soul complain that God had denied him strength of understanding and true knowledge and love of God himself, and moreover bestowed upon him so impotent a nature that he could neither control nor get the better of his appetites. . . . A horse is excusable for being a horse and not a man, but in spite of this he must continue in his state . . . and he who cannot subdue his passions nor hold them in check even with the terrors of the law before him, although he may be held excusable on the ground of his infirmity of nature, cannot enjoy true peace of mind or have any knowledge or love of God, but necessarily perishes."

Again:

"To your second query . . . I reply that neither the honest man nor the thief can do aught to cause pleasure or displeasure to God. If the question, however, be, whether the deeds of these, in so far as they include anything real and are caused by God, are alike perfect? I answer: *if we regard the deeds only, it may be that both are equally perfect* . . . If, finally, you ask what should move you to aspire to or to do that which I characterize as virtuous rather than anything else? I say, *I cannot know which of the infinite motives God has at His disposal, He may employ to determine you to such a course.*"

In another place, taking the example of a stone thrown by some hand, and hence impelled by an external cause:

"Now conceive, further, that the stone as it proceeds in its motion thinks and knows that it is striving, so far as in it lies, to continue in motion; then, inasmuch as it is conscious only of its endeavor and in nowise indifferent, it will believe itself to be most free, and to persevere in its motion from no other cause than that it wills to do so. *And this is precisely that human freedom of which all boast themselves possessed, but which consists of this alone: that men are conscious of their desires, and ignorant of the causes by which these are determined.*"

To remove the last objection, that we might be free at least in thinking, Spinoza adds:

"Your friend, however, affirms that we can use our reason

with perfect freedom . . . 'Who,' he asks, 'without a contradiction of his proper consciousness, can deny that he is free to think his thoughts, to write what he pleases, or to leave writing alone?' . . . I for my part, and that I may not contradict my consciousness—that is, that I may not contradict reason and experience, and yield to ignorance and prejudice—*deny that I possess any absolute power of thinking, and that at pleasure I can will, or not will, to do this or that—to write, for example.*"

In the melancholy history of the human race there are wonderful instances of blindness, lunacy, or whatever we may charitably call it; such instances as are furnished by those who keep up the search for perpetual motion, the squaring of the circle, the descent of man, the origin of the world, the evolution of thought from phosphorus, and the like self-contradictions. But can there be one more striking than this?—

One of the self-conscious fractions of a series, Benedict Spinoza, arises and says: "I deny that I can will, or not will, to do this or that, think this or that." For, if he cannot will, of what earthly value is this, in that case, *enforced* declaration? Another fraction, X, Y, or Z, arises and says: "I can will, or not will, so to do or think." Now, if that other fraction's statement is, as it is by *Spinoza's* own principle, equally enforced, necessitated, by the same substance, is it not also of the same validity? Yet, how is even this possible? How is it possible that there should enter into a thinking series of individuals, all of whom are absolutely determined in all their thinking, *the mere conception of freedom?* How can this *new* element, not in any way contained in any part or the whole of the series, enter it? The absurdity is not worth wasting words about.

The example of the stone in the above letter, which seems to have been considered strikingly clear by Spinoza, is also a very unfortunate illustration, and moreover a defective statement of the case. For the stone, to make a case in point, should have the consciousness not only of the one motion given to it, but at the same time of *innumerable other* motions in other directions, with a consciousness of a—real or assumed—power to choose between them; for such is the case in man, Spinoza himself mentioning men's desires in the plural. Now,

amplify the statement to this extent; give the stone such power to move in various directions; let it choose, after hesitation, which direction it will take; and in the sense in which the word "free" has any meaning at all, the stone *is* free.

It is very true that you may tell me that I am not free in making a choice—I am merely following my strongest impulse, an impulse that is part and parcel of nature; but this your statement is merely a metaphysical reasoning of yours, which you can never prove, whilst my assertion is the statement of a fact. Nay, furthermore, if you cavil at this, I can show to you clearly, firstly, that you can *never* prove that in acting I follow merely a natural impulse, such a proof being impossible; and secondly, when you turn upon me and assert that I also cannot prove that I act freely, I can demonstrate to you that your retort is *absurd*; for if I *could* prove it by a theoretical proof, i.e. by showing you the connecting link, or cause, I would by that very proof demonstrate it to be not a free act. A free act must be undemonstrable, must be simply an individual fact, if it is at all to be; hence each individual can have only positive knowledge of it by the fact of its occurring in him.

It is also useless to more than notice the fact, that Spinoza, in the latter parts of his *Ethics*—those parts which treat of the affections, passions, and the power of the will to control these psychological and physiological phenomena, and which parts have often been praised by men, who had become discontented with the undeniably fatalistic view of the first two parts, as of superior sublimity, and as affording an harmonious reconciliation with the view of freedom—that in them Spinoza falls into the similar self-contradiction of *urging* his readers to do certain things, whilst he utterly denies their power to do, or not to do, at will. Of course, every fatalist, who ever spoke or thought, failed not to indulge in this absurdity of nevertheless speaking and thinking as if men were free; but in Spinoza this contradiction is particularly conspicuous. For in these appeals of his he often grows quite eloquent and impassioned, speaking as if he truly believed, as he undoubtedly did, that men could adopt, or not adopt, at will, his views; and yet in the same breath ridiculing, with vehement polemical bitterness, the supposition of

freedom. The fact that he uses the word "freedom" throughout, he tries to excuse by explaining that he uses it as the equivalent for "beatitude"; but this is either a crude word-blunder, or another of his innumerable subterfuges. Of these latter, there occurs one in this connection, which is the last of the kind and that we shall attempt to point out. Scouting the proposition that such conceptions of universal validity as "good" and "bad" exist, and that "good" and "bad" are other than merely subjective feelings, which change with every individual, he instances the effect of music, which, he says, may be good for one person and bad for another.

If this were not mere trickery, it were hard to find a suitable expression for it. People certainly do talk loosely, and some persons may speak of music, in a metaphorical way, as good or bad; though there are appropriate musical adjectives that would accurately describe the conception to be conveyed; but does anyone pretend to say that the words "good" and "bad," when thus loosely applied to music, have that particular *moral* meaning against which alone Spinoza intended to direct his attacks? Is there anything in a morally good or bad act of a human being which could be made applicable to the effect of music in this manner?

The chief point which Spinoza raises in these latter parts of his *Ethics* is this, that all reasoning, willing, desiring, &c., are simply so many psychological and physiological conditions—conditions which he in these parts gathers, postulates, defines, and axiomates, in the same arbitrary, empirical way in which the first parts are put together; and that they are conditions of the two chief attributes, thinking and extension, which he in the Second Part had postulated as those of the one substance. As such conditions they are, of course, held together by the chain of causality, which rules this series of conditions, and are completely determined in every manner. Spinoza goes so far in his polemic against the possibility of a free act in these conditions—that is, an act by which something entirely new could be brought into the series, having no causal connection whatever with the preceding—that he denies (Part III., Prop. 2) the power of the soul to do anything but what it remembers. All the arts—above all, the art of music—this supreme human creation out of nothingness may,

therefore, be said to have had for him no existence; the moral universe he had no eye to see. Morality is, by his doctrine, to act "for one's own advantage" (Part IV., Prop. 24); to be free is to follow "that which we have recognized as the most important in life, and which we therefore most desire" (Part IV., Prop. 66); to extend our knowledge and cultivate our intellect is the only "good"; and the only "evil" and "sin" is not to do so; and the one is good only because it renders us more happy, as the other is bad only because it does not make our happiness so complete; though any one might just as well reverse these propositions for his individual case, since, being merely postulates of Spinoza's own empirical experience as to what he found productive of happiness in him, they can be overthrown by the empirical *dictum* of any other individual. As regards the immortality of the individual, he being a mere condition of the one substance in extended bodily form, there is of course no chance for it. (See Part V., Prop. 21 & 23, particularly the last sentence.)

Having thus sketched Spinoza's view of the possibility of free acts, as they appear when regarded from the stand-point of the substantiality-category, let us return to the instance of the assumed fraction and see how it will look upon this matter of freedom when unfettered by either category; in all likelihood it will in that very way get with its freedom a real God in place of the antropomorphic First Cause and the shadow of a represented Universal Substance. The curious in such matters would do well also to refer to Leibnitz's New System of Nature, &c., in No. 3, vol. v., of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, and examine there how the greatest mind, taking it all in all, that Germany has produced, has developed the same matter in his own inimitable way.

The fraction, then, we will suppose no longer to have for its problem only the development of self-consciousness, but the problem to become conscious of itself *as a FREE ACTIVITY*. We will assume that it is no longer a mere theoretical fraction, a mere intellect becoming conscious of itself, and the chief—nay, only—aim whereof would be, as in Spinoza's system it logically enough is, to develop this intellectual consciousness; but that it is also, synthetically with that

theoretical faculty, a practical faculty—a power to do, to act, to create—under which assumption it appears even now already, that the theoretical faculty will likely turn out to be not the primary, the end, but the secondary, the means; in short, that the intellect is the means whereby we are enabled to become the creators of a world within a world—of a new, never before existent, not yet and never in time to be completed, *moral* universe.

The fraction could certainly not become conscious of itself as a free, active being by means of its power to become conscious generally, its theoretical power; for by that power it would have to view every free act of its own under the two forms of causality and substantiality, or their reciprocal determinations, under all of which forms the view of freedom is impossible, as has been abundantly shown. It would, therefore, have to become conscious of itself as such a free, moral being in quite another manner. What is this manner? Only the fact can tell; as only the fact also tells of the existence of the theoretical faculty in any fraction. It is, therefore, to be taken as a mere assertion, that this manner is an *immediate consciousness*, an impelling activity, which can assign or discover no ground for its impulsion, but knows itself immediately to be the sole ground of its exercise. Language has called this consciousness by different names: the voice of conscience, the voice of God, genius, the moral law in us, the categorical imperative, &c. That this is the manner in which the assumed fraction becomes conscious of itself as free, we have confessed to be a mere assertion; but that the assumed fraction must in some manner so become conscious is necessary under the assumption; and each one can settle the matter for himself, a dispute on it being impossible, or idle. Now, let this assumed self-conscious fraction act in this absolutely free manner, do a deed or leave a deed undone in the universe already given to it by its theoretical faculty, the universe of time and space,—how will this deed appear to it? Evidently accompanied with the consciousness of an absolute deed, independent of all other phenomena or deeds that occur or may have occurred in the time and space universe; of a deed beyond the possibility of any doubt re-

moved from any *nexus* with whatever other world of desires, affections, sympathies, psychological and physiological manifestations, might have been furnished to it by the theoretical faculty; of a deed, solely and utterly its own, expressing its own absoluteness, timelessness, and independence; the consciousness of an absolute harmony of the deed and the doer, awaking perhaps in the lower psychological and physiological affections *feelings* of self-reverence, self-awe, self-respect. Having tasted this absoluteness and unutterable bliss of freedom once, it seems impossible that the fraction would ever be able to forget or discard it.

But now, how would this same deed appear unto another fraction? If that other fraction had also arrived at such self-consciousness of its absolute freedom, it *might* take in the true character of the deed, though it never could with certainty, since the essential characteristic could be known only to the self-consciousness of the other individual fraction—hence the morality of a deed is not a subject for dispute;—but if it had not arrived at such a self-consciousness, and were still merely a theoretical intelligence, it would and could view it only as it viewed other phenomena in its serial world, that is, either as the effect of previous causes, or as a fatalistic attribute of the one substance.

Leaving this point, as sufficiently exhausted, it remains to be seen in what manner the theoretical faculty of the morally free and self-consciously free fraction would now treat and view these new phenomena given to it, for, as occurring in the same consciousness, it could not help becoming conscious of them and their particular character; though certainly it might, as also free, either ignore the problem altogether, as the so-called common people do, or blindly insist on subordinating them to its own categories, as all philosophers did so subordinate until Kant, and as all do again now. The problem before it would be: how can I arrive at a comprehension of this co-existence of two worlds within another, one of which I *must* regard under the categories of my purely theoretical faculty, since otherwise I could not comprehend its phenomena; and the other of which I must regard as the absolute creation of myself and other free moral fractions like myself, the one the kingdom of the world, the other the

kingdom of God? For this reason: through its theoretical faculty the fraction is to explain to itself the possibility of the co-existence of an infinite number of free acts on the part of infinite fractions in their common time and space world; and this co-existence must be thought, and hence must be thinkable. That they cannot be thought under the categories of the theoretical faculty, causality and substantiality, has been abundantly shown; the thinking them together, relating them to each other, is, therefore, of an entirely different character, and needs as such a new name. You may call it moral order of the universe, pre-established harmony, or whatever other term seems best to you, so it signify a new, distinct thought. Furthermore, they must be so thought together in all their infinite occurrences; hence as thus harmonious in their totality as well as in each separate occurrence; as in each instance full, complete, absolute, expressing the whole totality, and yet in each instance but a part of it; expressing it fully, but infinitely newly; the acts of infinite individual gods, expressing infinitely in the world of their theoretical faculty, and thus making manifest to themselves by its means that absolute moral freedom which they must regard as harmonizing in those infinite acts, and the harmonizing unity whereof, which never enters the world of the theoretical faculty, they, worshipping, call God.

Foolish, therefore, beyond all description, to apply to freedom and to God that theoretical faculty which has for its function simply *to make visible* the absolute freedom to an infinite number of self-conscious beings, each of whom is and must be partaker of that freedom; foolish to argue and reason metaphysically about their nature, essence, and substance, when they are altogether of another world, a world which has only one attribute: Absoluteness, or Freedom.—This absoluteness and its essential characteristic, it has already been said, was first discovered, and thereby the moral world first truly created, by Jesus Christ. This fullness of God in us he first brought to clear consciousness, and as such utterly distinctive knowledge he gave it utterance: not by theoretical reasoning, but by the immediate utterance of the fact. Hence his wonderful self-reverence—the Son of God; hence also his wonderful humility—the Son of man.

In these days of shallow reasoning and loose language, the comparing of Christ with Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, &c., has again become as common as it was with Voltaire's friends. To any one who reads the sayings of Christ and the sayings of either of those men with an unprejudiced mind, the *dissimilarity* is rather that which is most apparent. Take Socrates, as the most generally known, and take him either as Xenophon or Plato reports him, and his characteristic is argument—cleverness in the use of the theoretical faculty and its two categories. Argument on all things and subjects; argument with the sculptor how to embellish his art; with the prostitute, how to increase the number of her customers; with whomsoever lists, *pro* or *con.*, any abstract proposition whatsoever.

Take Christ, and the reiterated burden of his words is: I am the Son of God; ye are all children of God; citizens of an eternal life, of an invisible world in this very world of our theoretical faculty. He never argues; he only tells the fact: yet this distinctive character of freedom, and hence of God, that it can only be told as fact and not be *proved*—that is, if you take the word “proved” in its ordinary sense, as meaning “demonstrated by connecting links,” though, of course, in this sense, you can also not prove to me that I live and see or hear—was lost sight of by nearly all his followers, till it was in a most singular way rediscovered by Immanuel Kant in an independent, scientific way, and after him more clearly expounded by Fichte in a complete Science of Knowledge.

Spinoza closes his *Ethics* with a reference to the calm his doctrine gives to the soul. The nature of this calm, a fatalistic resignation or acquiescence, seasoned with whatever pleasure may be gained from a cultivation of the theoretical intellect, we have already seen. It may be well to refer to the effect the view of freedom gives to the soul.

On the one hand, it must be confessed, supremest agony. To be a member of a world of absolutely free individuals, and become conscious of the history of this world so far as it has yet manifested itself in time and space through the theoretical faculty; to see how through six thousand years of conscious life these individual gods, each one with the same faculty of absolute divinity, have tottered, limped,

struggled, fought; committed absurdities, stupidities, errors, crimes; plunged headlong into slavery, misery, and unspeakable degradation; fallen into cowardice the most shameful, laziness the most disgusting, self-debasement the most loathsome; how their own sublime faculties have been subverted to torturing their better and more aspiring members with their doubt and despair; how they honor their Pharisees and crucify their Christs; and in what awful abysses of mental and physical suffering so many of them are wallowing,—is horrible! Men speak of the sufferings of Christ on the cross! They were paltry, insignificant; the mere torture of physical flesh and bone. Where he suffered was in Gethsemane; how he must have suffered! With all this consciousness of the agony and misery of his fellow-gods upon his soul! The lamb of God, carrying and staggering under the sins of the world!

On the other hand, ecstasy unutterable! To be conscious of yourself as an absolutely self-subsistent, free, creative individual, a co-maker and builder of a wondrous universe, rising with every moment of your existence into newer and clearer shape and being, and when you turn by your own free choice your life from this your proper home with God to the other home of your theoretical faculty, whereby you realize it to your consciousness, to the world of nature; to know that here there is no longer any secret and mystery for you; to see clearly every atom even of this home reflect in an infinitely varied way the reflected beauty of your own kingdom of God; to have all the possible modes of thinking of your mind always ready to apply to every phenomenon and collection of phenomena, and be able to gather the infinite representations of infinite wonders and beauties into their fundamental views, and these again in the phenomena of your own world of freedom in one grand view; to live day and night this eternal life hand in hand with God, He in you and you in Him; not even to know the meaning of death, since an infinite free activity to become conscious must most assuredly receive birth, and is by that birth alone distinct from God, but can never exhaust its activity, nor the self-consciousness of it, since the activity works infinitely new shapes and forms for that self-con-

sciousness; to be thus inaccessible to all the miseries, terrors, fears, and uncertainties of life; clear, determined, radiantly blessed in your own selfhood; suffering that agony of hell and sin only when you voluntarily enter it to help to achieve the redemption of men even as Christ did,—this is an existence so glorious that it cannot even ask itself seriously the absurd question of a why or a wherefore.

NOTES OF A CONVERSATION ON SHAKESPEARE'S "TEMPEST."

[Held at the Jacksonville Plato Club, by H. K. JONES, and reported by Mrs. SARAH DENMAN.]

In Shakespeare is consummated and celebrated the marriage of the Greek and Scandinavian cultures. The Greek age, the age of the ideal, the thought power, the fatherhood; the Scandinavian, the age of the actual, the will power, born of the heroic earth energies, the motherhood. And out of this Scandinavian maternity is the issue of the "Viking power," which leads modern enterprise; and without the marriage of these two cultures, the child, the realized Christianity of this age, could not have been born. Therefore, in Shakespeare are we historically in the fountains of modern Christian thought and achievement.

Shakespeare is not writing history or story, nor exhibiting mere gambollings of the imagination. His purpose is deep and living. He is portraying that which is eternal in the human soul; therefore he is immortal.

The "*Tempest*" is his programme. The unifying idea and key to the play is Life, in the world of time and sense. "*Tempest*" does not mean *a storm*, but is from "*tempus*," and signifies Life, and the two ways of life under the Divine Providences: the way of the providential and the fated experiences. To the man of righteousness and justice, the visible and invisible powers are subservient; to the man of injustice and evil, the same powers are dominant. The latter is fated, or destined, as in the speech of Ariel: